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STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG,
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN
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SUBJECT: EMBASSY KABUL STRATEGY FOR ENCOURAGING GOVERNANCE
IN AFGHANISTAN

Classified By: Ambassador William Wood for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

¶1. (U) Post has developed a Sub-national Governance Strategy Paper (shared with Department and NSC) to both guide USG efforts and encourage greater international investment and coordination in support for governance -- to complement the significant increase in investments being made in the security activities. The plan's key principles and elements are reflected in this message, which we hope will be incorporated into Washington discussions on how to strengthen governance in Afghanistan.

¶2. (C) Governance in Afghanistan depends on a revitalized and strengthened social contract between citizens and the government, consistent both with Afghan traditions and the constitution. Before Afghans, including traditional leaders, will be willing to work in partnership with the government, they must have confidence the government will be a reliable, effective, accountable and inclusive partner. The government will earn this trust by demonstrating it is able to provide a level of security, deliver core services (particularly health and education), and dispense justice. Progress in these areas will make it easier for citizens and local leaders to turn away from alternatives (warlords, druglords, and the Taliban) that have become institutionalized and which both undermine legitimate state functions and in some cases fuel the insurgency.

¶3. (U) The Embassy's strategy has three major components: strengthening the state institutions to ensure they are able to meet their responsibilities; providing support for the services which the state is expected to deliver; and encouraging outreach with the traditional and local leaders in order to facilitate a partnership with the state. Ongoing efforts to strengthen institutions at the central level are being complemented by new initiatives at the provincial and district levels. These include a new Provincial Governance Fund to encourage and help sustain improved performance by governors as well as significant expansion of existing programs at the provincial, district and community levels.

¶4. (U) The second element provides for major support for the core services expected from the state, including health, education and municipal services. Under the social contract

understood by Afghans, the state's ability and willingness to deliver these services, along with security and basic justice, will determine citizens' and local leaders' willingness form a partnership. Under the constitution, these services will be funded through the line ministries, which operate at the provincial and district levels. These ministry functions will be strengthened, along with their links to representative bodies, including the elected Provincial Councils and Community Development Councils.

15. (U) The strategy also addresses the need for active outreach to and inclusion of those currently not part of the government process. Specific targets are traditional and local leaders who themselves have found their own roles and influence weakened by years of political disruption and violence. In many cases they face a choice between illegitimate power bases (warlords, druglords, and the Taliban) and state institutions. Programs will work through still-fragile district and community-level institutions to both extend the services and influence of the state and at the same time incorporate the legitimate local leadership. These programs will support the GOA's efforts to extend the network of 17,000 Community Development Councils -- widely regarded as a success story. It also includes an effort led by President Karzai's Chief of Staff to encourage partnerships with traditional leaders.

16. (SBU) Efforts will be intensified to fight the corruption which is endemic in Afghanistan. The Government must prove it is willing to be accountable and is able to deliver justice if citizens and local leaders are to give it their allegiance. Corruption will not be a discrete item on the agenda at the International conference in Rome this July, but

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the conference is designed to give donor efforts in the area of Rule of Law greater coherence and leverage. This will facilitate the campaign to address the corruption issue.

17. (U) The U.S. is acknowledged to have the lead on governance policy in Afghanistan. Success depends on our long term strategy and investments, but we need to encourage other donors to do their part. We are using the JCMB process, established in the London Compact, to encourage other donors to play a more active role and to reinforce that Afghans have a stake and sense of ownership in the processes, institutions, and services being developed.

WOOD